

TF3DX/P SOTA # 03

Date: 17. – 19. September 2016
Summit: TF/SV-005 Esja
Other people: none
Start elevation: 60 m Summit elevation: 914 m
Hike horiz. distance : 9,7 km in 12,6 km out = 22,3 km total
Tent to summit 5,2 km, summit to tent 8,1 km
Hike duration: 34 hours 10 minutes total, including 2 night's sleep
To carry: To camp site: 20 kg in 18 kg out
Camp site to summit: 12 kg in 10.5 kg out
Overnighting: 2 nights in tent
Bands and modes: 20 m CW and 2 m FM
TX power: 2,5 W on 2 m and 3 W on 20 m
Antennas: End fed $\frac{1}{2} \lambda$ for 20 m (hor) and $\frac{1}{4} \lambda + 2$ radials 2 m (vert)
Radio conditions: Fair, notably better than during trips # 1 and #2
Number of QSOs: 2 m FM: 6 20 m CW: 16 (15 DX) - 22 QSOs total
Weather: Good until final descent to tent. Storm with gale-like gusts and heavy rain blown into the tent during the night. Earthquakes in the Hengill area (30 km away) were felt.
Trail: Easy to and from camp site, wetland less problem near river. Summit circle very varied, somewhat demanding.

Latitude and longitude in decimal degrees.

(Base map courtesy of National Land Survey of Iceland)





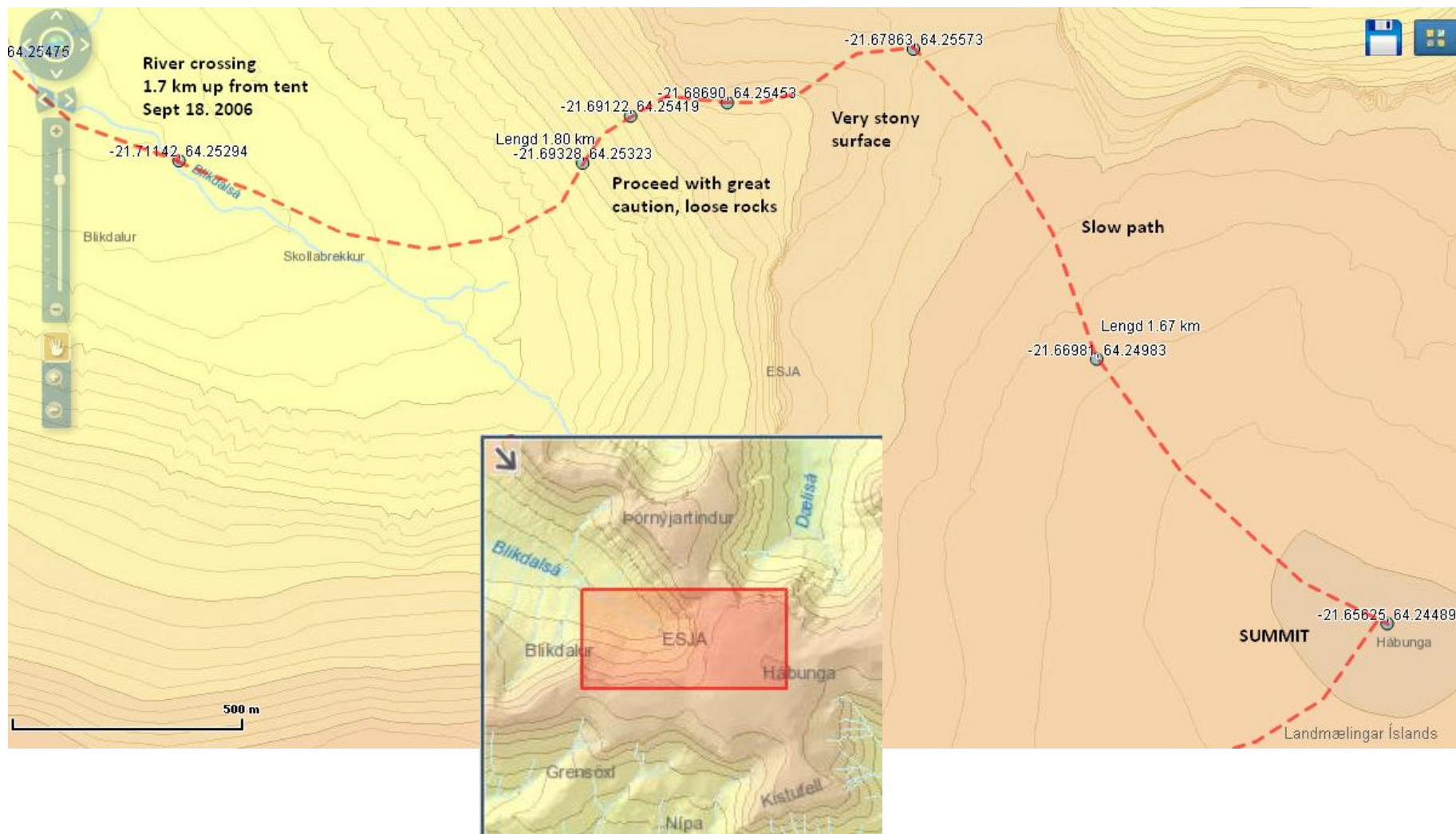
The original idea was to leave the tent further up below the main ascent, but making a round trip caught on.



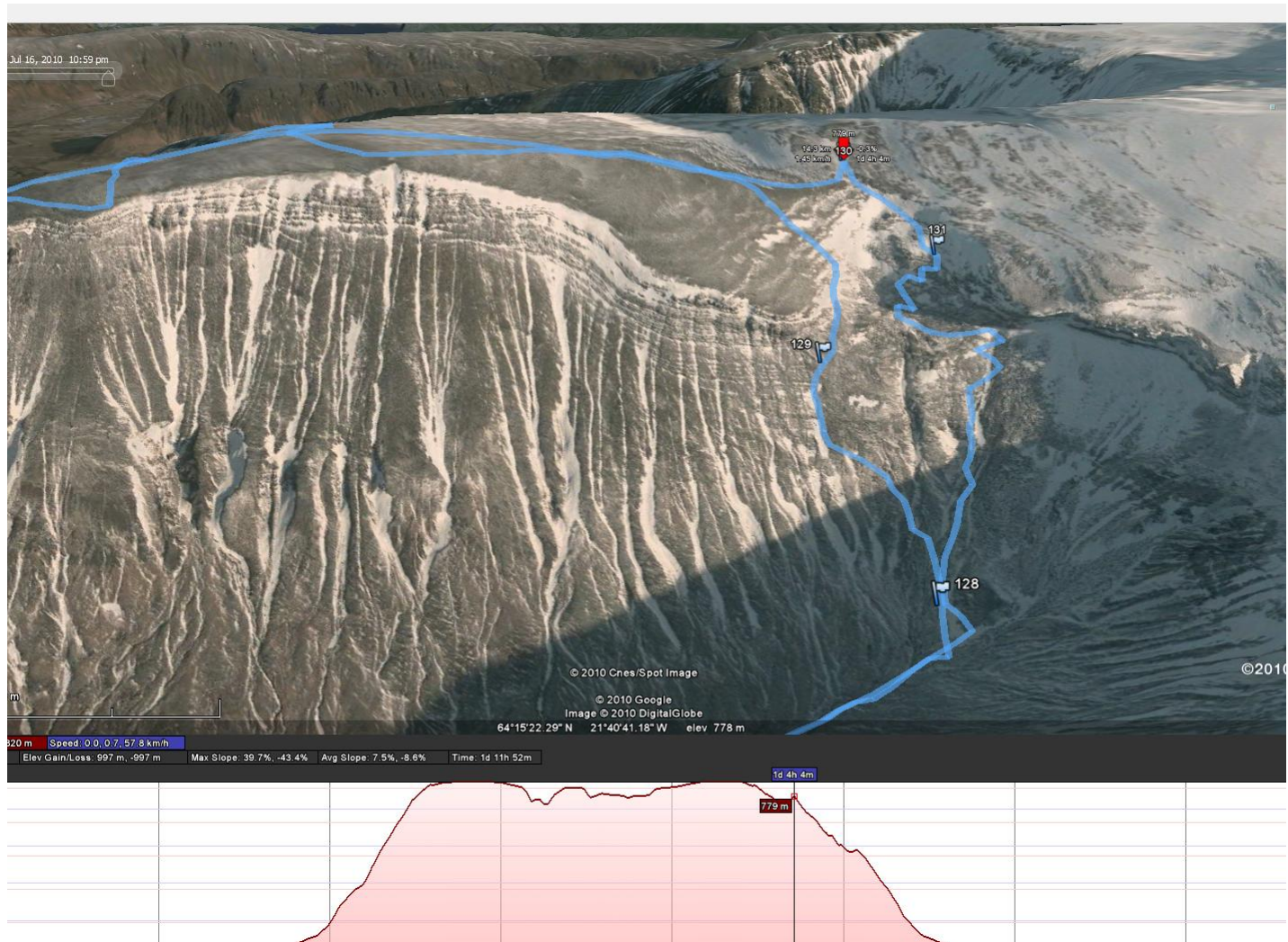
07:51 in the morning, sunrise has not quite made it down to the valley. Town of Akranes at distance.



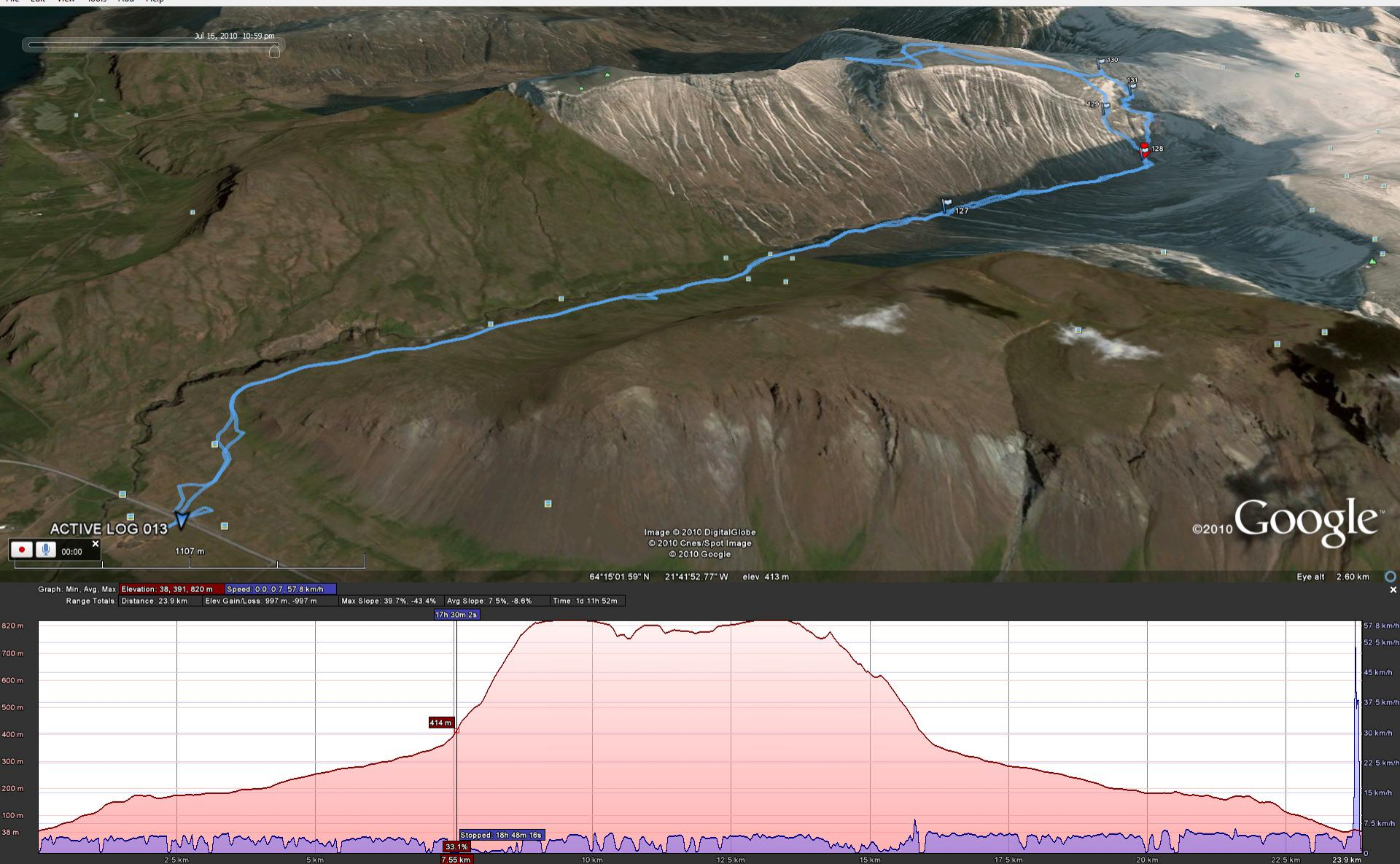
Nearing the main ascent start. The Blikdalur river is usually small this far into the valley, frequently passable by stepping stones.



Up and towards the summit. Solo ascent up the pass is not recommended without secure communication due to loose and heavy rocks. Only waypoints were saved for this trip, free-hand tracks are approximate.



This pass was in fact tested in the company of TF3VUN (harmonic) in 2010. Up to the left, same way as this time, and down on the right. Less rocky but may be more slippery in critical places if wet as could be expected now. Note that the SOTA trip takes to the right after the ascent, not left as we did in 2010.



A good view of the hike trail up the 7 km long Blikdalur. Camped by the red flags in 2010 at 400 m elevation.



On the way up.



Still higher.



The final stretch up the pass.



Up on the ridge, looking north across the fjord Hvalfjörður. The peak to the left in the far blue is SV-004 (1053m).



Looking back on the way towards the summit. Not the best surface to cross!



*A flock of rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus Mutus*) taking on the white winter clothing. The mountain crown above, Botnssúlur, sports SV-002 (1093 m) and SV-003 (1086 m). To the left is Hvalfell SV-007 (852 m).*



The summit is no glorious peak!



The no-rod parafoil lifted the 14 MHz half wave gracefully right out of my hand at first. But before I could operate the wind became too strong, folded the kite blocking the air channels. Futile attempts cut me back an hour.



This makeshift “ski pole” + cairn support brought instant reply to my 20 m CQ; 14 Eu stns, KA1R from USA and 1 TF.



Kerhólakambur seen to the west. My trip back will run along it in this direction and down on its west end behind sight.



Reykjavík comes into sight. The most frequented path to the Esja summit is via Þverfellshorn's busy trail.



Danger! Gullies cutting in close to the path along the Kerhólakambur ridge offer



..... free fall towards Blikdalur valley if care is not exercised when visibility is impaired.



Looking back towards the summit, some 4 km away.



Below Kambshorn, the west end of Kerhólakambur. My point for turning north, down to the tent in Blikdalur valley. Darkness catching up with me due to hassle with kite.



Reykjavík to the south. Still 2 ½ km and a 400 m descent to tent. Got pitch dark with growing tailwind half way down. Just as well I packed a headband lamp and a reserve. If not, I would have skipped some QSOs at the summit!



Packing early next morning. Best bet in total darkness and rainstorm was to add another night. My hat off for the tent, it took its most severe beating ever during that night. Fierce gusts came down the slope of Kerhólakambur, building repeatedly to an explosion like blast followed by a sudden quietness for half a minute or so. Kept waking me up!



*The carvings of Blikdalur river, looking back near the mouth of the valley.
Beginning to think of good breakfast at home!*